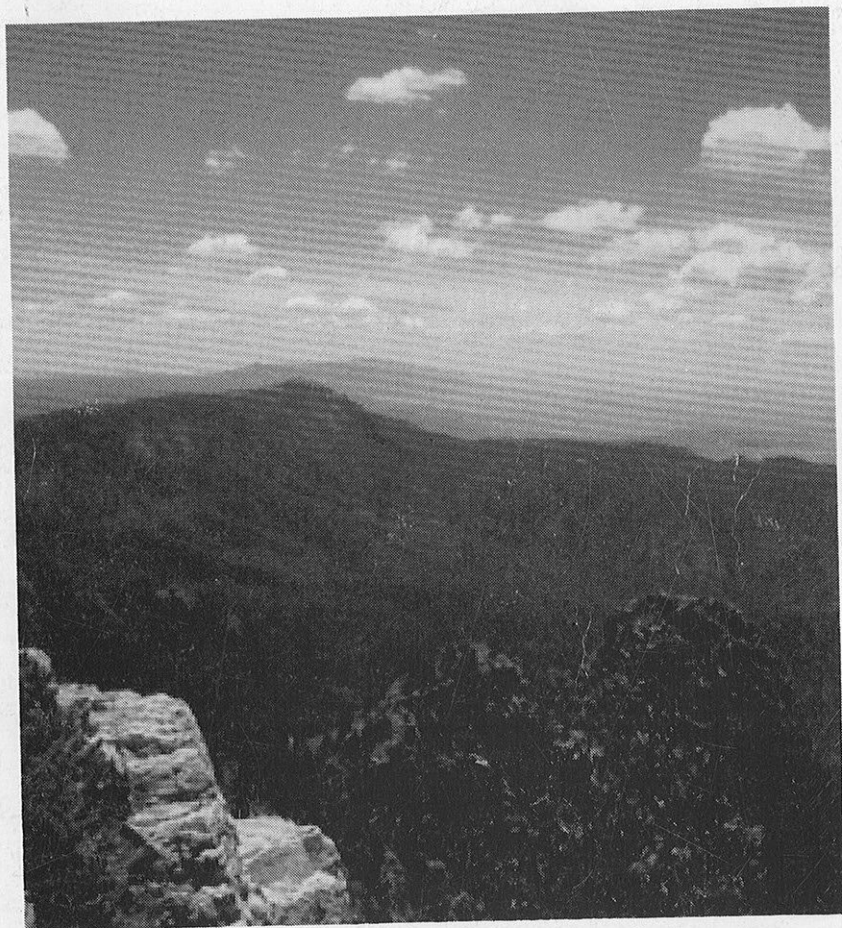


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## THROUGH THE RAIN

Sobs of grey water  
rain over China.  
Town like dirty aprons  
are tied to ashen rice fields  
under the obstructed sky.

Fog and the wear of revolution  
have settled on this June evening.  
Thoughts overflow  
the tracks leading  
from Shanghai to Beijing.

The sharp tide of reverie  
draws its sword  
across the uniforms of industry,  
rubble and high brick walls  
tangled with rusted wire.

In the deception of speed,  
a contorted pine in quiet dusk  
shelters black-necked geese  
in recondite shadows,  
returns them home  
along silver-tuned canals.

In the darkness  
of China's eastern provinces,  
phantom eyes  
wink through slanted downpour,  
at shuddering panes.

*Stephanie Sears*  
*New York, New York*